

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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February 2016

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Grantee Spotlight: Baptist Health South Florida

by Guenevere Crum



Grant funding to Baptist Health South Florida has played a major role in the success of its ASPIRE program, which provides internship opportunities for young adults with disabilities in Coral Gables, Florida.

Baptist Health South Florida received a \$60,000 grant from The Able Trust for the ASPIRE program, which provides 12-week internship opportunities for participants in different positions within the hospital's Coral Gables location. Students from the Atlantis Academy between the ages of 17 and 24 have been recruited for this employment program. Each one is assessed by the school counselor and program director, who match their skills and personalities to available hospital departments and career mentors.

Baptist Health South Florida has made the program a competitive process for all involved. Students are interviewed by a standard panel similar to what hospital employees encounter, and also experience a slightly-modified orientation that mirrors the hospital onboarding process for new employees. Mentors are recruited through a competitive application process from the vetted departments by management-level supervisors.

The interns say that the ASPIRE program experience has allowed them to grow in new and surprising ways, teaching them how to develop professional relationships within their departments and with supervisors. Devon, an ASPIRE participant, described the internship experience as a growth opportunity to learn about new occupations she hadn't considered before, improving her social skills.

"Basically, it helped me not to be so shy or closed off; talk to a person face-to-face without anxiety," she said.

(continued on page 3)

THE
ABLE
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25TH

ANNIVERSARY

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.

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A Message from the President



Measuring the employment rate for People with Disabilities

During 2015 The Able Trust worked with the Florida Chamber Foundation to establish benchmarking unemployment rates for Floridians with disabilities, because there has been no regular reporting or published data on rates for this significant group of Florida's workforce. Instinctively those who work on employment opportunities for people with disabilities knew the unemployment rate for this group is much higher than the same rate for the rest of the workforce, but actual data was not reported.

Dr. Jerry Parish, Chief Economist for the Florida Chamber Foundation conducted this important research, entitled "Quantifying the Unemployment Rate for Workers with Disabilities in Florida" using current data from the Department of Labor and the extensive American Community Survey. The study included the compilation of statewide statistics as well as a county-by-county employment rate. From the report, "Only 30.4% of the people-with-disabilities population is employed, compared to 73.5% of the population without a disability in the 16 to 65-year-old category. This difference of 43.1 percentage points is substantial – if the individuals with disabilities desire to work, it could be a potential source of workforce for Florida employers and could help fill some of the gaps left as large numbers of workers leave the workforce over the next few years for retirement."

The study was based on information available for 40 counties in Florida, which hold 96% of Florida's citizens. Interestingly, there is a wide and very statistically significant variation in the employment rate for people with disabilities by county, which is not true for the general population. This means there are factors in some counties that encourage a higher employment rate for people with disabilities, factors that do not equally affect the general workforce in that county. Thus, differences in the mix of businesses in a county would affect the employment rate of everyone equally and would not explain why businesses in that county are hiring people without disabilities at a higher rate.

The study reports the employment rate by county, with the three counties exhibiting the highest employment rates as Monroe, Leon, and Collier. The three counties with the lowest rates are Hernando, Citrus, and Highlands. The high of 47.9% employed compared to a low of 15.4% suggests that some activities are occurring that factor significantly into the differences.

The results of the study will be used to help identify the most impactful programs and as a benchmark for future year's comparisons, with a goal of increasing the employment rate as a statewide total and an individual county rate each year. The full report can be found on the Able Trust website, www.abletrust.org.

We are grateful for the work of the Florida Chamber and its Foundation in this important study.

Regards,

**Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA
President & CEO**

(continued from page 1)

This experience has given her self-confidence an extra boost, propelling her to participation in the Miami-Dade College ACCESS program. It is no small feat to learn how to travel independently to and from work in the greater Miami-Dade area with public transportation, and thanks to this program, four participants learned to do just that.



ASPIRE program interns gain valuable work experience that will lead to opportunities for successful employment; aligning with the mission of The Able Trust.

Grant funding from The Able Trust has helped Baptist Health South Florida create a new culture of inclusion for staff members in departments that were represented during the internship program. In addition to this, participants have gained valuable work experience ranging from learning interview and daily work skills, the importance of meeting department goals; even some work fundamentals like how to operate a time clock at the beginning and end of each shift.

The internship experience can be best summed up by the experience of Maya, whose progression from “seriously shy” to “confident” with coworkers and customers has not gone unnoticed by those who work with her. Maya’s supervisor, Stan, sums up just what an internship experience can offer to someone just beginning in the world of work.

“She is so prepared to go on and use her internship experience to transition to her next job faster,” Stan said. “She is an asset!” ■

The Able Trust has awarded more than \$35 million to grantees across the state of Florida, enabling thousands of Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

Partners Making a Difference - Rotary Club of Tallahassee

by Ray Ford, Jr.

Service Above Self.

This transformational leadership model has been the credo of the Rotary Club of Tallahassee since its beginnings way back in the 1920s. Rotarians seek to better their community through acts of service to those they work and worship with. And this organization has gone far beyond just providing financial support to the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), one of The Able Trust's nationally-recognized youth programs, but has sent dedicated men and women to serve in many Forum capacities.



YLF is a five-day leadership and social training event for Florida high school students with disabilities. Each summer, 50 students travel to Tallahassee to participate in this event. For more than a decade, Rotarians have volunteered to serve as airport greeters and chaperones, guiding YLF participants through baggage claim

and to a shuttle that takes them to the Forum. Rotarian Joe Mellichamp remembers one such outing many years ago when a young lady in a power chair had trouble getting her battery re-connected after a flight from Tampa.

"The flight attendants had to unhook the battery to get her and the chair on the plane," he recalled. "When they landed, no one knew how to put the thing back together. We fiddled and fiddled with it, until one of the guys figured out what to do. The lights came on; the chair started moving, and that young lady had the biggest smile on her face."

Over the years, monetary donations by the Rotary have earned them a Gold-Level recognition among Able Trust supporters (\$10,000 - \$24,999 range). However, the main objective of Rotary is service – in the community, in the workplace, and throughout the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues.

In addition to greeting students as they arrive, and escorting them through security and waiting with them until they depart for home, Rotarians serve as waiters and waitresses during the dinner etiquette training for students on their first night at the forum. For many students, it is their first experience at a formal dinner. Rarely do they see more than one fork and different drinking glasses at a setting.

The Rotary Club of Tallahassee was chartered on November 10, 1922. Today it occupies a special place in this community. It is the oldest and largest service club in Tallahassee; but more to the point, it reveals through its long record of service what is important to its members and to their view of the community and its needs. Rotary club membership represents a cross-section of the community's business and professional men and women. The world's Rotary clubs meet weekly and are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races and creeds. The international motto for Rotary is "Be a Gift to the World." The Rotary Club of Tallahassee is truly a gift to The Able Trust. ■



Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left) awards Joe Mellichamp (right) with the 2015 Able Trust Ability Award for Volunteer of the Year, for his continued support of the Florida Youth Leadership Forum in connection with the Rotary Club of Tallahassee.

Celebrating 15 Years of Employment Success: Disability Employment Awareness Month

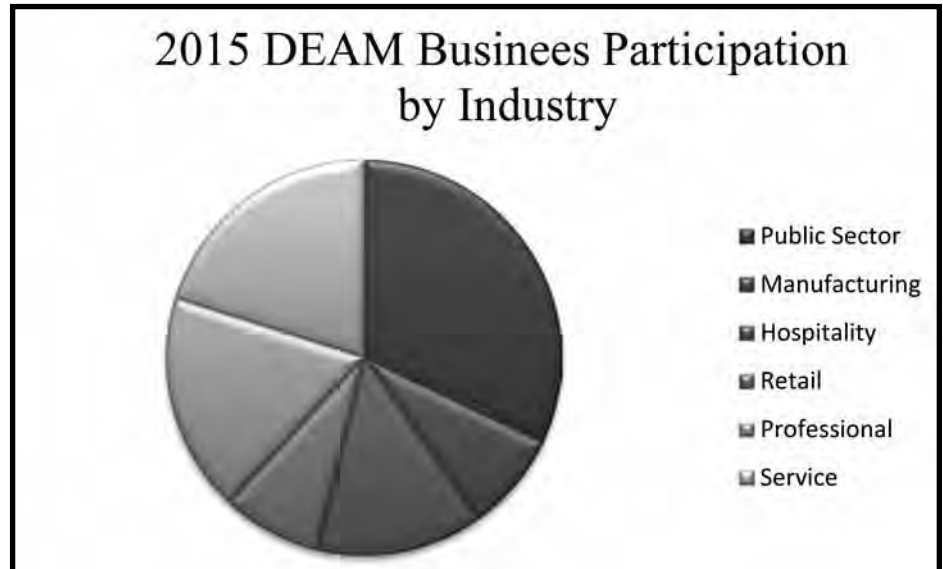
by Joseph D'Souza

This past year, Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day (DEAM/DMD) celebrated its 15th year of existence. Thanks to employment initiatives by The Able Trust and other local entities, DEAM/DMD activities extend beyond a single day, encompassing an entire “season” which begins in September and lasts into February. The ultimate goal of DEAM is to have career exploration activities take place year-round, increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The 2015 DEAM/DMD season was made possible by the hard work of 80 community liaisons working in 62 counties throughout Florida. Together with more than 180 businesses and organization partners, they provided career exploration opportunities for 1,900 participants.

Florida DEAM/DMD was generously supported by 13 committed organizations:

WellCare, Publix, Universal Orlando, Moore Communications Group, Florida Chamber Foundation, Darden Restaurants, Florida Power and Light, Florida Hospital, Mustard Seed Advisors - Raymond James, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Dan Marino Foundation and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. ■



The Impact of Internships

Wakulla County

On November 5, 2015 MacKenzie, a 9th grade student from Wakulla High School, had a job-shadowing experience with the Mayor of Tallahassee, Andrew Gillum. MacKenzie has this to say of her experience:

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to shadow Mayor Gillum. I had a chance to see many aspects of city government while I was there. I also attended his meetings which helped me understand what a mayor does. The mayor is a busy man, and I appreciate his willingness to provide time just for me.”

MacKenzie hopes to have a career in the FBI and believes she will benefit from this experience.



DEAM participant MacKenzie learned skills in city government by shadowing Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum.

Bay County

This was Bay County’s eighth year of participation in DEAM. Approximately 80 participants spent the morning job shadowing at a local business of their choice, where they had mock interviews and career preparation workshops. Later, they attended a luncheon hosted by Publix Supermarkets and Olive Garden. More than 20 businesses participated in DEAM in Bay County this year.



Mock interviews are just one of many employment preparedness tools used during DEAM activities.

Florida High School High Tech Annual Conference

by Allison Chase

Each fall, the Able Trust hosts an annual conference as a professional development experience for local program coordinators of the Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) Program. The objectives of the conference are to provide training on the successful implementation/continuation of a HSHT site; introduce and provide information on HSHT program partners, including institutions of higher education and business leaders; and to generate new ideas for program planning and resources.



This year's training included STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) industry tours to simulate the planning, facilitation, and debriefing activities required for a successful tour. The coordinators participated in the tours for a full morning and afternoon of culminating experiences designed to replicate hands-on STEM workshops for HSHT students. Coordinators chose from the following opportunities:

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT): The Orlando FDOT Urban Office houses planning staff, the Regional Traffic Management Center, and the Florida Highway Patrol Command Center. Participants learned about careers in the transportation and construction industries, including a presentation about the Ultimate I-4 project currently under construction.

Culminating Workshop: Transportation Science and Careers Workshop – Led by the Orlando Science Center: Participants designed a model transportation system connecting two towns, and operated by natural forces. Discussion focused on instructional techniques to adapt similar activities to HSHT students' needs and interests.

Seminole State College, Automotive Technology & Sustainable Energy Programs: This tour showcased automotive technology projects developed by state college students, including an electrical car and solar-operated trailer. Participants toured the state-of-the-art automotive workshop, and viewed a presentation on a successful high school automotive program for students with disabilities.

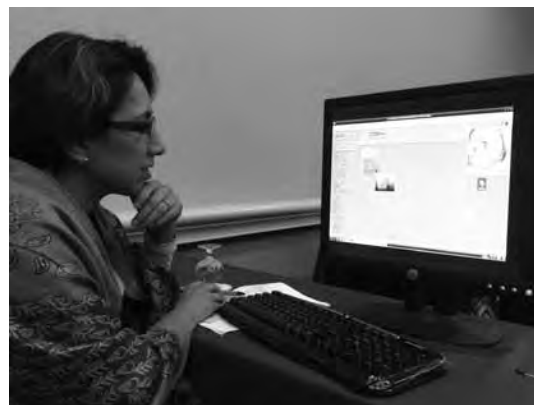
Culminating Workshop: The Toothpick Factory – Led by Florida Advanced Technology & Education Center: The Toothpick Factory is a hands-on activity, set in a manufacturing context that stimulates discussion and awareness about a wide range of soft skills that are essential in today's manufacturing work relationships.

Orlando Tech, Allied Health Science Programs, Orlando Campus: Coordinators learned about a variety of high-demand careers in the allied health industries that require two years or less for certification including: Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Patient Care Assistant, and Surgical Technician. The tour included a diagnostic case study in Orlando Tech's patient simulation center.

Culminating Workshop: Health Science and Careers– Led by the Orlando Science Center: Participants rotated through six simulated learning stations, recording their observations and analyzing results in a "Medical Journal." Stations included: Heart Dissection, Blood Testing, Urinalysis, Cell Structures, Checking Vitals, and the Effects of Stimulants & Depressants. Discussion focused on instructional techniques to adapt similar activities to HSHT students' needs and interests.

Orlando Tech, Gaming and Audio/Video Design Programs, Orlando Campus: Coordinators learned about careers in the simulation and digital media industry that require two years or less for certification: 3D Animation, Digital Audio & Video Production, and Game Simulation, Animation, & Programming. The tour included entering the gaming world through Orlando Tech's game simulation center.

Culminating Workshop: Programming with Raspberry Pi – Led by Aaron Mitchell, Brevard Bayside HSHT Coordinator & Harris Corp. Consultant: Participants practiced basic computer programming skills using the Raspberry Pi. The Raspberry Pi is a low cost, credit-card sized computer that plugs into a computer monitor or TV, and uses a standard keyboard and mouse. It is a device that enables users to explore computing, and learn how to program in languages including Scratch and Python. The device is capable of doing most of the functions of a desktop computer, from browsing the internet and playing high-definition video, to making spreadsheets, word-processing, and playing games.



Collier HSHT Program Coordinator, Claudia Lozano, practices basic programming skills on the Raspberry Pi.

Other highlights of the conference included Lockheed Martin Vice President of International Business Development, Joe Garland, as keynote speaker at the annual awards dinner; workshops conducted by the University of South Florida; and Project Transition Education Network including: Grant Writing, Service Learning, Community Resource Mapping, and Transition Planning. ■

Make Your Nominations for the 2016 Able Trust Ability Awards



The Able Trust Ability Awards ceremony will be held Friday June 17, 2016 in Tallahassee, FL.

Nominations are now being accepted!

AWARD CATEGORIES

Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program

Beverly Chapman was named the 1989 Disabled American of the Year and the Floridian of the Year and is remembered for her advocacy for employment and independence for persons with disabilities. The Beverly Chapman Award provides recognition and high visibility for outstanding job placement programs for persons with disabilities in Florida. This award is presented to a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

Dr. George L. Spelios Leadership Award

Dr. George Spelios was a founding director and past Chair of The Able Trust who touched the lives of many through his passion and commitment to serve people with disabilities. As a tribute to his years of dedication and service, this award recognizes the outstanding leadership and advocacy efforts of an executive director or president of a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

Media Representative Award

Media plays a vital role in the public's perception of individuals, products and services, especially for the disability community. This award honors an individual member of the media or a media organization for excellence in presenting and/or reporting about people with disabilities.

Employer of the Year Award

Because employers offer valuable resources to Florida's citizens with disabilities, this award recognizes businesses of all sizes that have an exceptional record of disability friendly practices, including hiring persons with disabilities, making reasonable accommodations and demonstrating efforts beyond simple compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended.

Adult Leadership Award

This award will be presented to an adult over age 21 with a disability. This individual exhibits community and nonprofit leadership, is employed full time or part time and serves in a volunteer leadership position with a local organization. (e.g. nonprofit board member, community committee member, commission council, etc.)

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY Wednesday May 4, 2016.

Forms can be submitted by mail, fax or email to:

The Able Trust, 3320 Thomasville Rd., Suite 200, Tallahassee, FL 32308

Fax: 850-224-4496 ~ Email: info@abletrust.org ~ For questions, call 850-224-4493.

The 2016 Florida Youth Leadership Forum

by Ray Ford, Jr.

For the past 16 years, The Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) has given high school students with disabilities the opportunity to learn valuable leadership and social skills necessary to build character traits of self-confidence and determination as these young adults make the transition to independent living.



Florida Youth Leadership Forum
EMPOWERMENT | EDUCATION | EMPLOYMENT

The Able Trust is now accepting applications for YLF 2016, which will take place July 20-24, 2016 in Tallahassee. Fifty slots are open to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors from all corners of the state. Darien is one of the many hopefuls that have submitted an application. Diagnosed with a developmental disability since birth, Darien remembers how his father has always motivated him to set high goals and achieve them.

Earning an invitation to YLF 2016 would definitely qualify.

“Leadership, communication, and teamwork are very important skills to learn,” Darien said. “And I believe I will gain some of these by participating in the forum.”

Caroline is another hopeful who, despite her learning disability, has set lofty goals for herself after experiencing difficulties in school.

“I knew early on that I was different,” Caroline said. “And I felt like I needed to prove something, so I took sixth-grade classes in the fifth grade so I could jump ahead toward my appropriate grade level.”

Applicants endure a tough selection process, which includes a written narrative. Participants are selected based on those narratives, as well as their school and community activities. Students can still apply for YLF 2016 by visiting www.abletrust.org, and completing the online application. ■



The Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a five-day leadership and social training event for high school students with disabilities. Participants not only learn about careers and disability resources (left), but public speaking skills and how to network in professional (middle) and casual environments (right).

The 2016 Florida High School High Tech Speech Contest

This year will mark the beginning of the Able Trust's Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) Program Research and Speech Contest. The contest will have two levels of competition: local/site and state. Winners of each local contest will compete in state competition against other local winners. The 2016 state contest will be held on March 11 at the Able Trust Board of Directors meeting in Orlando.

The goals of the HSHT Speech Contest are to:

- Develop research, public speaking, and communication skills of students which are critical to successful employment and self-advocacy; and
- Introduce students to policy topics relevant to all Floridians.

Contestants will speak on one of three topics (Water Quality & Supply, Quality of Life & Place, and Compensation for College Athletics) and will be critiqued on the following points:

- Speaking Skills
- Command of the Audience
- Topic Analysis & Conclusions
- Attention
- Mannerisms & Gestures
- Poise

Contest results will be posted on The Able Trust website (www.abletrust.org) in late March. ■



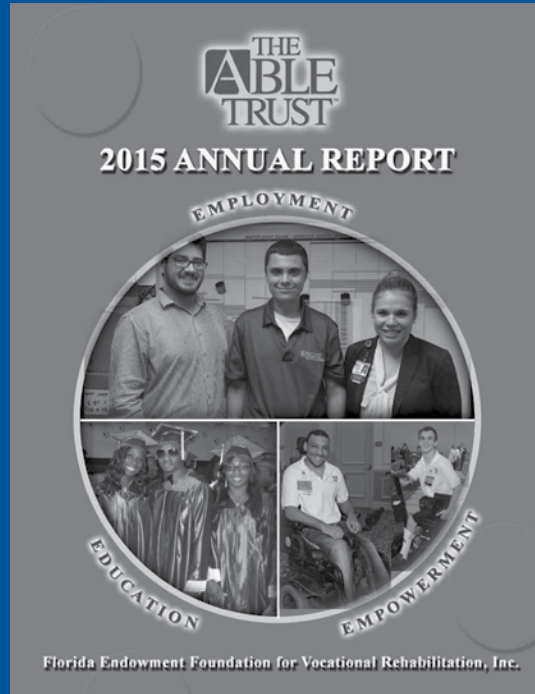
The Able Trust Alumni Association

The Able Trust is pleased to announce the establishment of an alumni association for past participants in Able Trust programs such as Florida High School High Tech, the Florida Youth Leadership Forum, and various grant initiatives.

The alumni association is in its developmental stages, consisting of monthly conference calls and quarterly meetings to determine its focus and direction, as this entity develops plans to provide members with resource and networking opportunities.

For more information about The Able Trust Alumni Association, please send inquiries to info@abletrust.org. ■

The 2015 Annual Report is Now Online!



Visit www.abletrust.org to download your copy.

Follow The Able Trust on Twitter

Be sure to receive the latest Able Trust news and events by becoming a follower on Twitter!

Type “The Able Trust” in your search bar, then click FOLLOW on the bottom-right corner.



MAKE A DONATION TO



Make A Difference With Your Donation to The Able Trust!

There are many ways you can support The Able Trust's programs to make successful employment available to Floridians with disabilities, and a gift of any amount will make a difference. For general contributions in support of our youth, mentoring and grant programs, you may click the "Make a Donation" button on our website, www.AbleTrust.org, or mail your gift with the form below to:

The Able Trust, 3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida, 32308-7906

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- For a special occasion OCCASION: _____

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Do you have questions about Able Trust giving opportunities, corporate sponsorships, or endowment and planned giving? Please feel free to contact us at info@abletrust.org or 850-224-4493.

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$35 million in grants to nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment-related purposes, enabling thousands of Florida citizens of all ages with disabilities to enter the workforce. The Able Trust youth programs have provided career development and transition for thousands of high school students with disabilities since its beginnings, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school.

For more information about The Able Trust visit www.abletrust.org.

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Memorial Gifts

There are many ways for you to make a gift in remembrance of someone special that will have meaningful significance for years to come. Here are a few options to consider:

Make a Deductible Gift and Receive Life Income

You may wish to make a memorial gift while providing current life income for yourself. If your memorial gift is made to fund a charitable remainder trust, you can receive income monthly, quarterly or annually. You receive a charitable deduction for your gift this year and avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale of your appreciated assets. The remainder passes to us as a gift in memory of your loved one. Please contact us for more information on charitable trust plans.

A Memorial Gift of Cash or Property

A gift of cash is one of the simplest ways to remember your loved one or friend. You receive a tax deduction for the value of your gift to The Able Trust. Please designate the person you wish to remember and the best way that we can honor them. If you are making a memorial gift of non-cash property, your deduction may depend on the type of property proposed for gifting. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

Contributions are deductible according to applicable IRS guidelines. The Able Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and in compliance with the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act.

Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

March 10

Able Trust Alumni Association Meeting
 Pelican Grand Beach Resort,
 Ft Lauderdale

March 10

Able Trust Board of Directors Reception
 Pelican Grand Beach Resort,
 Ft Lauderdale

March 11

Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting
 Pelican Grand Beach Resort
 Ft Lauderdale

May 19

Able Trust Open House
 Able Trust Offices
 Tallahassee, FL

June 17

Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting
 Golden Eagle Golf & Country Club
 Tallahassee, FL

June 17

2016 Ability Awards Luncheon
 Golden Eagle Golf & Country Club
 Tallahassee, FL

July 20 - 24

2016 Youth Leadership Forum
 Tallahassee, FL